



**Brian J. Johnson**

*Director, California Water Project*

*Staff Attorney*

September 11, 2007

Doug Bosco, Chair  
State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn: Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chair Bosco:

I am writing on behalf of Trout Unlimited to support the Pine Gulch Watershed Enhancement Project. As you may know, Trout Unlimited and other groups are pursuing similar projects in Wine Country and throughout the California coast.

We believe that the benefits of the Pine Gulch Project will extend beyond the farmers and fish populations in the Pine Gulch watershed. By demonstrating the feasibility of the concept, and providing a successful experience to learn from, it can serve as a model and resource for similar efforts elsewhere.

Specifically, the Project can be an important model for TU and others attempting to address depleted stream flows by pursuing rainy-season diversions and storage ponds as an alternative to summer water withdrawals. The Project's work on water right applications and change petitions pursuant to Section 1707 of the California Water Code should be useful as an example. The Project may be the first to submit applications to the SWRCB for appropriate permits and storage rights for the purpose of moving away from summer, riparian pumping. It will also be among the very first of a handful of efforts statewide to submit petitions under Section 1707 to dedicate riparian water rights to fish and wildlife protection and enhancement.

Because the regulatory hurdles associated with such water right applications and the 1707 program may be significant barriers to others attempting similar projects, we hope to work with the participants in the Pine Gulch Project to help the State Water Board and other agencies create a routine permitting process for the projects that follow.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Johnson

cc: Barry Epstein, Carol Whitmire

*Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization*

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